



**To: Film Industry Financial Incentive Review Committee**

**From: Michell Howard, Manager, Wyoming Film Office**

**Subj: Film Industry Financial Incentive report**

**Date: 9-30-11**

The purpose of the Wyoming Film Office is to promote Wyoming locations as settings for film production. When production companies film in Wyoming, they contribute to the economic vitality of that local community and to the state as a whole. Production companies purchase goods and services from local businesses, including everything from accommodations, food and beverage, hardware and lumber supplies, equipment rental and more. They also employ local crews ranging from just a few to hundreds. Film production also contributes significantly to Wyoming's tourism economy by enhancing the public visibility through television, DVD and motion picture distribution.

#### **Film Industry Financial Incentive (FIFI) Program:**

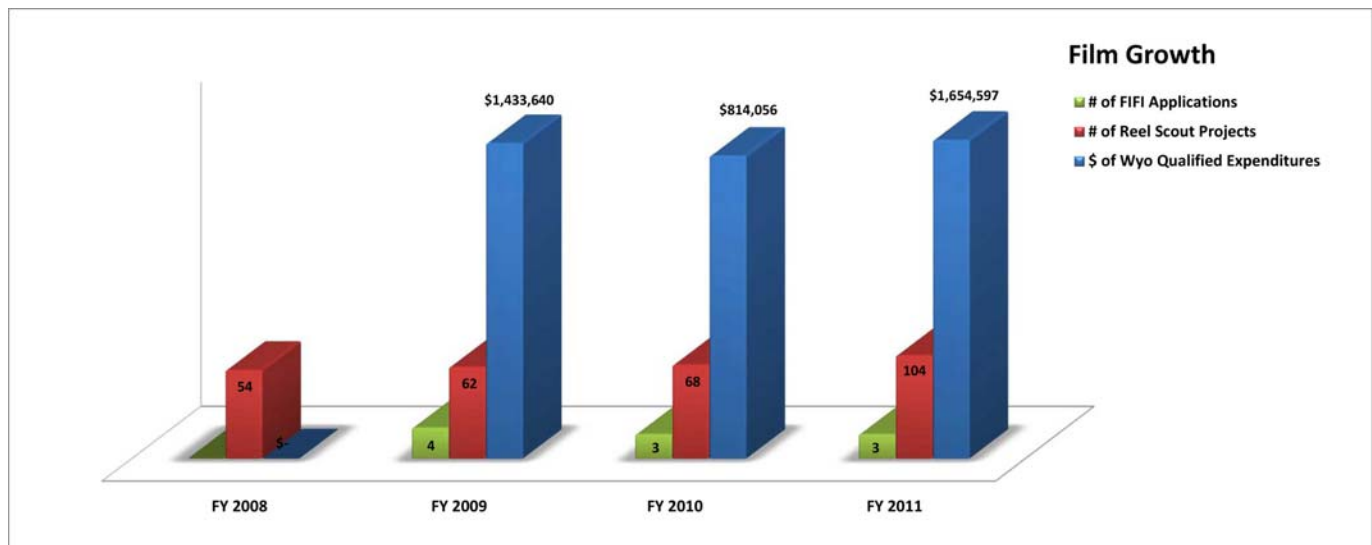
The Wyoming Film Industry Financial Incentive (FIFI) program was developed to provide the entertainment industry a financial incentive and make Wyoming more competitive in bringing the jobs, economic impact and tourism promotion that on-location filming contributes to a state. FIFI legislation was passed by Wyoming's 57<sup>th</sup> Legislature and enacted into law in February 2007. The incentive program is a cash rebate for production companies of up to 15% on dollars spent in the State of Wyoming during a film shoot. The production company would have to spend a minimum amount of \$200,000 to qualify and then meet additional criteria to determine the rebate percentage between 12%-15%.

#### **Performance Measures:**

Through marketing and promotion efforts, awareness about location opportunities, the incentive program and the increased number of qualified work force has expanded interest in filming in Wyoming. Film Office inquiries are fulfilled through an online packaging system called "Reel Scout." The software combines a comprehensive contact management system, digital photography library and a local crew database to better showcase Wyoming's production resources. By utilizing the web-based Reel-Scout database, the Film Office can increase the number of digital images and location packages offered to production companies. The system allows the Film Office to track requests from production companies including the status of projects, locations scouted and city or county statistics to measure usage. From FY08 to FY11, the number of Reel Scout location packages distributed has increased by 93%.

Film project inquiries from FY11 include the following:

- Still Shoots - 14 catalog projects
- Commercials - 9 commercial projects
- Television Series/Episodes - 22 television projects
- Documentaries - 14 documentary projects
- Features - 34 feature film projects
- Other – 11 other projects (PSAs, Corporate Videos, etc.)



### FIFI Program Results (inception to date):

In FY09, the FIFI program began to show concrete production activity so it serves as the performance benchmark for FIFI activity including the number of applications as well as total economic value of productions while filming in Wyoming. Since the inception of the program, ten (10) FIFI projects have been approved with Wyoming expenditures totaling just under \$4 million including \$1,433,093 spent on salaries for local Wyoming workers.

### FIFI Approved Projects:

**Teton Gravity Research, LLC** – Session documents the most talented athletes in skiing with global distribution through Video Action Sports (VAS Entertainment), NBC World of Adventure Sports and iTunes studio.

**Wyoming expenditures \$400,000; Wyoming employment wages \$255,513; Rebate \$52,384**

**SSD Productions, LLC** – Swift Silent Deep is the story of a secretive, underground crew who call themselves the Jackson Hole Air Force with global home video distribution through VAS Entertainment, Fireside Distribution and X-treme Video.

**Wyoming expenditures \$437,000; Wyoming employment wages \$87,000; Rebate \$47,459**

**Cable to the Sky, LLC** – Megastructures: Cable to the Sky is a one-hour documentary on the construction of the new Jackson Hole aerial Tram. This program will be broadcast worldwide by the National Geographic Channel with global DVD distribution to follow.

**Wyoming expenditures \$301,600; Wyoming employment wages \$8,125; Rebate \$44,905**

**Jackson Hole Entertainment Partners, LLC** – Jackson Hole to the Max is a promotional video of the Jackson Hole area hosted by Reba McEntire. The film is showing daily at the Historic Pink Garter Theatre and DVD's are also available for purchase.

**Wyoming expenditures \$675,035; Wyoming employment wages \$414,276; Rebate \$85,875**

**Evergreen Productions** – Discover the Wild is a wildlife series that focuses on the wildlife and the wild places of Wyoming with planned distribution through PBS.

**Wyoming expenditures \$295,000; Wyoming employment wages \$157,250; Rebate \$44,250**

**Reichert Films, LLC** – One Mountain is the story of Hunter Wood and Dan Petrus and their efforts to ski and climb the Grand Teton of Wyoming. Film will be entered into the larger film

festivals and several distribution companies have expressed interest including National Geographic, Participant Films and Jake Eberts.

**Wyoming expenditures \$292,248; Wyoming employment wages \$174,100; Rebate \$43,837**

**Teton Gravity Research, LLC** – 2010 Ski Film is the annual ski film by Teton Gravity Research and DEEPER is the story of Pro Snowboarder Jeremy Jones traveling the world in search of the ultimate skiing line. The films are distributed via online sales direct to consumers, retail shops across the US and worldwide via VAS Entertainment.

**Wyoming expenditures \$412,800; Wyoming employment wages \$336,829; Rebate \$53,664**

*Rebates still pending documentation approval for payment:*

**Hogan Films** – *Cougar: Nature of the Beast* is a documentary project about the changing lives of cougars in the Jackson Hole area. Once the apex predator with little competition from other large carnivores, the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone and a growing grizzly bear population now forces them to share the landscape with these other high level hunters. Using high-tech science, research and a controlled animal study lab, they will uncover the highly specialized “tools” the cougar must employ to survive this new environment. This is a project in partnership with Wink Inc and National Geographic.

**Estimated Wyoming expenditures \$270,000; Rebate up to \$40,500**

**Brain Farm Digital Cinema** – FLIGHT is an epic journey following snowboarder Travis Rice around the world including Wyoming. This project is a one-hour film with distribution planned for domestic networks and VAS Entertainment.

**Estimated Wyoming expenditures \$935,000; Rebate up to \$140,190**

**Best of the West Productions, LLC** – THE BEST OF THE WEST is a weekly television series promoting big game hunting as well as Wyoming wildlife and scenery. The show currently airs in the U.S. on the Outdoor Channel and in Canada on WildTV.

**Estimated Wyoming expenditures \$450,000; Rebate up to \$67,500**

#### **FIFI Budget Break-Down:**

<b>Revenues</b>	
Initial Appropriation	\$ 1,000,000
09 Biennium Appropriation	\$ 1,000,000
09 Budget Reversion	(\$41,423)
10 Budget Reversion	(\$1,100,000)
11 Biennium Appropriation	\$ 900,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,758,577</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	
Teton Gravity Research, LLC	\$ 52,384
SSD Productions, LLC	\$ 47,459
Cable to the Sky, LLC	\$ 44,905
JH Entertainment Partners, LLC	\$ 85,875
Evergreen Productions	\$ 44,250
Reichert Films, LLC	\$ 43,837
Teton Gravity Research, LLC	\$ 53,664
Hogan Films	\$ 40,500
Brain Farm Digital Cinema	\$ 140,190
Best of the West Productions, LLC	\$ 67,500
<b>Total</b>	\$ 620,564
<b>Remaining FIFI Balance as of 9/30/11</b>	\$ 1,138,013
<i>* pending declared expenses audit</i>	

### Production Infrastructure Development:

Although the FIFI program has made Wyoming more competitive in the film industry, an ongoing challenge is the lack of production infrastructure to support projects filming in Wyoming. Here are some examples of programs that have been developed in partnership with the Film Office to overcome that barrier.

Central Wyoming College has combined the successful programs in Communication and Radio/TV broadcasting with a new program in Film.

- The film program is designed to prepare students for a career in the filmmaking industry. Students are introduced to the art of screenwriting, directing, editing, and mastering filmmaking preproduction, production and postproduction skills.

Lights, Camera, Action Film Production Workshops and Trainings

- Wyoming Community Media has scheduled digital video filmmaking workshops in partnership with the Carbon County Higher Education Center; Laramie County Community College with the Wind River Tribal College.

### FIFI Marketing Efforts:

- Marketed Wyoming and the Film Industry Financial Incentive (FIFI) program to hundreds of producers and location managers at the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Locations trade show in Los Angeles which was held in conjunction with the Producers Guild of America's annual Produced By Conference. We also sponsored a filmmaker reception during the Tribeca Film Festival in New York and distributed marketing materials at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, UT.
- Hosted a familiarization tour around northwest Wyoming for six film professionals from commercial production to feature film locations managers and producers. Participants included the Location Manager from *3:10 to Yuma*, the Production Designer from *Spider-Man 3* and the Producer of the Wyoming story based television series, *Longmire*.
- Supported local film events to help create an environment for film production by sponsoring the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival, the Cheyenne 24 Shoot-Out and the Cheyenne International Film Festival. We also participated at the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Wyoming

High School Short Film Festival in Casper and assisted with marketing efforts for the Wyoming Film Festival in Saratoga.

- Promoted the fourth annual Wyoming Short Film contest to attract independent filmmakers with Wyoming storyline projects. The Film Office received 43 qualified submissions and the winning film was posted on the Tourism and Film Office websites along with Film Office social media channels.
- Purchased advertising in trade publications such as *Production Update* (P3) magazine, *Kemps*, DGA and PGA directories, *Creative Handbook* and *Locations* magazine with distribution to thousands of industry decision makers.
- Utilized social media accounts for the Film Office to promote Wyoming production information and opportunities to in-state film crew and also to market FIFI and the Wyoming Short Film Contest.

**M**ove over, "Modern Family." Jackson Hole is a hotbed of movie production these days, with several feature films being shot in and around the area.

Community donations and the Wyoming Film Office's tax incentive — a rebate if at least \$200,000 is spent in production — are helping some of the projects currently in the works get to the movie or TV screens.



Examples of projects that FIFI is helping to recruit and FIFI advertising.